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LETTER DATED 21 AUGUST 1996 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward, on behalf of His Excellency, General Sani Abacha, Head of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the text of the final communiqué issued at the end of the fourth meeting of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS Committee of Nine on Liberia, which was held at Abuja, Nigeria, on 17 August 1996. I would be grateful if the text could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Isaac L. AYEWAH
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires, a.i.

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Annex

Final communiqué of the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States Committee of Nine of Liberia, on its fourth meeting, held at Abuja on 17 August 1996

1. The Heads of State and Government of the Committee of Nine on Liberia held their fourth meeting at the Executive Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at Abuja on 17 August 1996, under the chairmanship of His Excellency, General Sani Abacha, Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority. The Heads of State and Government reviewed the situation in Liberia and considered ways to put the Liberian peace process back on course, in conformity with the Abuja Accord.

2. The following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives were present at the meeting:

His Excellency Matthieu Kerekou
President of the Republic of Benin
Head of Government

His Excellency Blaise Compaore
President of Burkina Faso
Head of Government

His Excellency Jerry John Rawlings
President of the Republic of Ghana

His Excellency General Sani Abacha
Head of State, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

His Excellency Captain Edward Singhatay
Vice-President and Minister of Defence of The Gambia
Representing the President of the Republic of The Gambia

Mr. Barry Moussa Barque
Minister of State
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Togolese Republic
Representing the President of the Togolese Republic

Mr. Amara Essy
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
Representing the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

His Excellency Lamine Camara
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Guinea
Representing the President of the Republic of Guinea

Mr. Massokhna Kane
Minister of African Economic Integration of the Republic of Senegal
Representing the President of the Republic of Senegal

3. The following guests were also present at the session:

His Excellency Professor Wilton Sankawulo
President of the Council of State of the Liberia National Transitional Government

His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare
President and Head of State of the Republic of Mali

His Excellency Ibrahim Mainassara Bare
President of the Republic of the Niger

His Excellency Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

4. The following were invited as observers:

- OAU Eminent Person in Liberia

- Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Liberia

5. The following persons also attended the meeting in an advisory capacity:

- Mr. Edouard Benjamin, ECOWAS Executive Secretary

- Major-General Victor S. Malu, ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) Field Commander

6. The fourth meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Committee of Nine was preceded by a meeting of Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of ECOWAS member States and a meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine on Liberia.

7. The Heads of State and Government reviewed the situation in Liberia as presented in the report on the thirteenth meeting of Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of ECOWAS member States and the report on the eighth meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine on Liberia. They considered ways to bring the Liberian peace process back on course and focused attention on the following issues:

(a) Assessment of the implementation of the Accra mechanism;

(b) Extension of the Abuja Peace Agreement of August 1995 and review of its schedule of implementation;

(c) Measures to ensure compliance with the peace plan by the Liberian parties;

(d) Performance of the Council of State;

(e) Status of Monrovia;

(f) Elections in Liberia;

(g) Strengthening of ECOMOG;

(h) Restructuring the armed forces, police and other security agents;

(i) Return of arms seized from ECOMOG and property looted from the United Nations and other agencies;

(j) Humanitarian assistance to Liberia.

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACCRA MECHANISM

The Heads of State and Government noted the non-observance of several important obligations inherent in the mechanism put in place at the seventh meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine with the aim of relaunching the peace process.

EXTENSION OF THE ABUJA AGREEMENT OF 19 AUGUST 1995 AND REVIEW OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed that the Abuja Agreement, which was designed to usher in peace and lead to the organization of free and democratic elections on 20 August 1996 remained the most appropriate legal framework for finding a peaceful settlement to the Liberian crisis. They therefore decided that it should be retained in its entirety. However, given that very little progress had been made in its application, it had not been possible to adhere to its implementation schedule.

Consequently, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed that the Abuja Agreement remained the best and last framework for finding durable peace in Liberia and should thus be retained in its entirety. It was therefore agreed that the validity of the Abuja Agreement should be extended for another nine months, from 21 August 1996 to 15 June 1997, and that the following programme of implementation should be undertaken before the holding of free, fair and democratic elections on or about 31 May 1997.

20-31 August 1996	Cease-fire, disengagement of factions from checkpoints and present combat positions
1 September 1996- 30 November 1996	Delivery of logistic supplies by the international/donor community to ECOMOG
20 August 1996-	Verification of cease-fire and disengagement

31 January 1997	by ECOMOG, United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) and Liberia National Transitional Government
3-10 October 1996	Assessment meeting in Liberia by Chairman's Special Envoy with ECOMOG, UNOMIL, representatives of donor community and Liberia National Transitional Government
12 October 1996- 31 January 1997	Reconnaissance mission by ECOMOG and UNOMIL of arms collection centres
4-8 November 1996	Committee of Nine meeting (Ministerial) at Monrovia
7 November 1996- 31 January 1997	Deployment of ECOMOG to agreed safe havens by Committee of Nine
22 November 1996- 31 January 1997	Disarmament, demobilization and repatriation
6-13 January 1997	Verification visit to Liberia by Chairman's Special Envoy, with ECOMOG, UNOMIL, representatives of donor community and Liberia National Transitional Government
20 January-15 April 1997	Preparation for elections
10-15 March 1997	Committee of Nine meeting, Monrovia
17-24 April 1997	Assessment visit to Liberia by Chairman's Special Envoy, with ECOMOG, UNOMIL, representatives of donor community and Liberia National Transitional Government
30 May 1997	Election Day

The new schedule of implementation of the Abuja Agreement also provides for the dissolution of all factions by 31 January 1997, resignation by 28 February 1997 of the members of the Council of State and public office holders who wish to run for election. The new Government is expected to be sworn in on 15 June 1997.

The Heads of State and Government adopted a mechanism designed to ensure strict compliance with the peace plan by all Liberian parties.

MEASURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PEACE PLAN

The Heads of State and Government deplored the lack of sincerity and commitment shown by the Liberian factions to the peace process. They therefore adopted a decision envisaging measures that might be invoked against any persons

found guilty of acts capable of obstructing the peace plan concluded by the signatories to the Abuja Agreement. Such measures that would be invoked against any defaulting party would include:

(a) Restrictions on travel and residence;

(b) Freezing of business activities and assets in member States;

(c) Exclusion from participation in the electoral process;

(d) Restrictions on the use of the airspace and territorial waters of member States;

(e) Expulsion of members of the families of the Liberian leaders and their associates from the territories of member States;

(f) Request that the United Nations Security Council impose visa restrictions;

(g) Restrictions on imports from Liberia;

(h) Invoking of the Organization of African Unity 1996 Summit resolution calling for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal to try all human rights offences against Liberians.

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed the need for member States to observe the arms embargo declared against the warring factions and therefore adopted a decision designed to ensure strict compliance therewith. They urged member States, particularly countries bordering Liberia, to adopt all measures to stop the flow of arms from their territories into that country and noted with appreciation the measures taken by the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire in that connection. They recognized the right of ECOMOG to carry out a search on anyone, including members of the Liberia National Transitional Government and any other government official in the territory of Liberia.

ECOMOG was directed to ensure that only airports under its control were operational. The Heads of State and Government decided to set up a committee to monitor the implementation of the peace plan. This committee may prescribe sanctions to be taken by member States against persons who obstruct the implementation of the peace plan. The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their resolve not to recognize any Government that comes to power by force of arms.

PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE

The Heads of State and Government were concerned about the performance of the Council of State and felt that a change in the leadership of the Council would improve its effectiveness and cohesiveness.

The Heads of State and Government, therefore, agreed to the appointment by the signatories to the Abuja Agreement of Mrs. Ruth Perry, a former senator of

the Republic of Liberia, as the new Chairman of the Council of State. The Heads of State expressed their appreciation to the departing Chairman, Professor Wilton Sankawulo, for his services, which were rendered under rather difficult circumstances.

They also stressed that, if in future any Council member was found wanting, that member would be replaced.

The Heads of State and Government adopted a code of conduct to be observed by members of the Council of State and other public office holders in implementing the Abuja Agreement which would be used as a yardstick for assessing their performance, individually and collectively.

Status of Monrovia

The Heads of State and Government expressed satisfaction at the measures taken by ECOMOG to restore relative calm to Monrovia. However, they expressed concern at the recent incidents of harassment, abduction and assassination of civilian members of rival factions or other ethnic groups. They strongly condemned the growing tendency to partition the city of Monrovia along factional lines and mandated ECOMOG to intensify its efforts to restore Monrovia and its environs to their original safe haven status.

ELECTIONS IN LIBERIA

The Heads of State and Government noted that, because of the failure of successive peace plans, it had been impossible to organize free, fair and democratic elections. They directed that the process be set in motion for the holding of elections in Liberia on or about 30 May 1997. To this end, they recommended that modalities for the organization of elections be formulated, taking into account the electoral laws of Liberia.

They appealed to the United Nations, donors and non-governmental organizations for support in ensuring that the elections are successfully organized.

STRENGTHENING OF ECOMOG

The Heads of State and Government took note of the fact that successful implementation of the peace plan would require the deployment of 18,000 troops to Liberia. They commended the efforts of those member States of ECOWAS that had promised to contribute troops once adequate logistic support was provided.

The Heads of State and Government expressed gratitude to the Government of the United States of America which has embarked on its second assistance package involving the provision of logistics and communications equipment.

RESTRUCTURING OF THE ARMED FORCES, POLICE AND OTHER SECURITY FORCES

The Heads of State and Government expressed grave concern about the fact that security agencies have deep affiliations with the factions, and condemned the control wielded over the police by fighters and non-qualified personnel.

They endorsed the proposal to restructure the armed forces, the police and other security forces to reflect geographical and ethnic balance. They noted the offer made by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to sponsor the "train the trainers" programme. ECOWAS should look into the possibility of obtaining the required assistance from countries within the region.

RETURN OF ARMS SEIZED FROM ECOMOG AND PROPERTY LOOTED FROM THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER AGENCIES

The Heads of State and Government strongly condemned the seizure of ECOMOG arms and ammunition by fighters belonging to the armed factions. They also condemned the looting of vehicles and other assets from the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The Heads of State and Government directed Liberian faction leaders to return the arms and ammunition seized from ECOMOG and to release to the United Nations and other organizations the vehicles and other property looted from them. They called on the authorities of countries bordering Liberia to assist in identifying, confiscating and returning such property in their territory to their rightful owners.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA

The Heads of State and Government firmly condemned the crimes, atrocities and other acts committed by the Liberian fighters that violate the rules of armed warfare. They issued a new warning to the factions to desist from such acts, which are offensive to the international community. The Heads of State and Government directed the faction leaders and their fighters to undertake to abide by the terms of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1994 and the annexed Protocols as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They called on the faction leaders to guarantee the safety of relief personnel in Liberia, to enable them to resume their operations.

The Heads of State and Government expressed gratitude to the Organization of African Unity and to the United Nations for their constant support in the quest for peace in Liberia.

At the end of their deliberations, the Heads of State and Government expressed their sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to His Excellency, General Sani Abacha and to the Government and people of Nigeria for the warm, brotherly hospitality extended to them during their stay in Abuja.